

2004 Chafee Heritage Award Recipients

The annual John H. Chafee Heritage Award acknowledges the contributions of individuals in the Blackstone Valley in the spirit of the late Senator's legacy of environmental preservation and improving the quality of life.



Sutton 300 Committee

In 2004, the Tricentennial of Sutton was observed by a year-long celebration through the dedicated efforts of this committee of committees that strategically organized, fundraised, marketed, and executed an amazing array of historical, fun, and adventurous events, exhibits, and festivities. Their efforts provided residents and visitors with the opportunity to harken back through the years to reflect on Sutton's history and highlights.



Frank Matta

Frank is engaged in many roles related to improving the quality of the Blackstone River through participation as a board member, volunteer, and concerned citizen. Whether knee-deep in the River while directing a cleanup, grinning as a new kayaker under his tutelage learns a proper paddling technique at Paddle Club, serving as chairman of the Blackstone River Watershed Council, or maintaining the park at Manville Falls in Cumberland, Frank's community and environmental commitment is evident in all he does.



Sarah Buchanan

Active as a Volunteer in Parks (VIP) with the Heritage Corridor since 1992, Sarah has grown to be an enthusiastic supporter of numerous Valley organizations and events. Now a junior at Burrillville High School, Sarah continues her participation in River clean-ups, RiverFest, Big Night, and other activities while also being deeply involved in her high academic accomplishments and student leadership in high school.

ONE DEPOT SQUARE, WOONSOCKET, RI 02895 WWW.NPS.GOV/BLAC/HOME.HTM 401.762.0250



Landmarks Saved

Slatersville Mill, at the heart of America's first planned industrial village, is poised for a revamping. The North Smithfield Planning Board has approved a master plan put forth by the Boston-based DSF Group for a \$40 million redevelopment effort that would create 230 living units, a health club, gallery/museum, and public space for a library and meetings.



The Uxbridge Inn, a nostalgic fixture in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, was saved from demolition when Corridor partners, ultimately Frances Cove III, Chairman of Saver's Bank and the Uxbridge Historical Commission presented a creative vision to the Inn's new owners. The fully restored building will open as Saver's Bank in early 2005.



Stanley Woolen Mill in Uxbridge, one of only a few remaining wooden mill buildings from the 1800s, will soon be humming with activity as the complex is restored. Opportunities for housing and/or mixed use are being explored that will complement the mill's proximity to the Blackstone River and Canal Heritage State Park.

The Blackstone River Valley CorridorKeepers, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the history and cultural landscape of the area, is leading a grass-roots effort for reauthorization of the Corridor Commission as it faces termination in 2006. For more information and to join, visit www.corridorkeepers.org.

Looking Toward the Future



Corridor Commission

EXECUTIVE SUBCOMMITTEE

Robert Billington, Chairman
President, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council

Richard T. Moore, Vice Chairman
Massachusetts State Senator

Donna Williams, Secretary
Conservation Advocacy Coordinator
Massachusetts Audubon Society

Michael D. Cassidy, Treasurer
Director, Department of Planning and Redevelopment
City of Pawtucket

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Marie Rust, National Park Service Regional Director

COMMISSIONERS

Katherine Abbott, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Matthew Amorello
Chairman, Massachusetts Turnpike Authority

Dr. William Ankner

Barbara Berke, Director,
Massachusetts Department of Business and Technology

Kenneth Bianchi
Executive Director, Rhode Island Bridge and Turnpike Authority

Paul P. Clancy, Jr.
Councilor, Worcester City Council

Mary K. Connor

Michael McMahon
Director, Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation

Patricia Mehrtens
Cara Metz
Executive Director, Massachusetts Historic Commission

Louise M. Redding, Redding and Redding, CPA

Edward Sanderson, Executive Director,
Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission

Burton Stallwood
Rhode Island Federal Marshal, U.S. Marshal Service

Fred Vincent
Acting Director, Rhode Island Department of Environmental
Management

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STAFF

Michael Creasey, Executive Director

Sue Andrews, Director of Heritage Preservation and Development

Halford Welch, Roger Williams Memorial Site Manager/
Blackstone Special Projects

Elizabeth McConnell, Chief of Administration

Administration

Diane Angell, Budget Analyst

Pauline Lozeau, Executive Secretary

Linda McWhorter, Cooperative Agreement Specialist/
Budget Analyst

Lorraine Provencher, Secretary

Heritage Preservation and Development

Chuck Arning, Audiovisual Specialist

Ray Boswell, Seasonal Park Ranger

Nancy Brittain, Community Planner

Suzanne Buchanan, Volunteer In Parks Coordinator

Peter Coffin, Seasonal Park Ranger

Barbara Dixon, Special Events and Tourism

Mark Jewell, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Kevin Klyberg, Park Ranger

Karen Mateleska, Biologist

Diane Wendland, Landscape Architect

Jack Whittaker, Park Ranger

Roger Williams National Memorial

Sparkle Bryant, Park Ranger

John McNiff, Park Ranger

Maria Levesque, Park Ranger

Paul Coletta, Maintenance Worker

*“Even if I knew that tomorrow
the world would go to pieces,
I would still plant my apple tree.”
Martin Luther*



When he walked through the door ten years ago, Michael Creasey focused on getting the Corridor Commission reauthorized for ten years. That accomplished, he was off and running...and never stopped.

This February, Michael moved on to become the Superintendent at Lowell National Historical Park to share his many talents at a different National Park Service site in a different river valley of Massachusetts.

As Deputy and then Executive Director at the Corridor Michael was the driving force behind its reauthorization and continuing growth, sharing the vision, setting the course, completing hundreds of projects, building advocacy and partnerships, bringing people together, raising the national profile of the Blackstone Valley and completing the groundwork for building its future. Always looking ahead, he was never satisfied with the status quo.

He is as comfortable in a suit and tie discussing economic development with dignitaries as he is wearing a PFD and wielding a chainsaw on a river cleanup. With an easy smile and simple eloquence he has connected people, places and history to where we have been with where we want to go. He combines the energy of ideas with the passion of belief to drive creativity and move the Corridor vision into actions.

Thank you, Michael for sharing your passion, your skills and your leadership. We will miss your energy and will see your imprint in the many achievements you leave behind in the Blackstone River Valley. We will take care of those apple trees you have planted.



Happy Trails to Ranger Whittaker

2004 marked the retirement of Jack Whittaker, Dean of the Blackstone Valley Rangers. Since 1991, Jack shared his wisdom and wit with thousands of visitors and school children. He was on the first team of rangers hired by the Corridor Commission, having previously served as an educator for over three decades. His contributions to the Valley will be sorely missed.

Commissioners and staff join together to offer their heartfelt thanks to Ranger Jack, and send him best wishes in his second retirement.



Nancy Brittain

Nancy Brittain served as community planner for the Heritage Corridor for 12 years

and led major Corridor efforts such as the preservation of significant historic sites and village centers throughout the Blackstone Valley. Nancy also served as the Section 106 historic compliance officer for the Corridor and coordinated numerous efforts with state, federal, and local groups. The Corridor Commission thanks Nancy for her dedication and sends her best wishes in her future endeavors.

Cover photos of Flyfisherman and Look Out View by Don Anderson.



Linda McWhorter

Linda McWhorter provided three years of dedicated, tireless service, and shared many smiles with Corridor staff and friends. Linda served in many capacities including receptionist, executive secretary, and cooperative agreement specialist.



Lorraine Provencher

Lorraine Provencher served three years as planning secretary to the Corridor. Many thanks for her enthusiasm and dedication to the Blackstone Valley.



Blackstone River Valley...a real American success story!

On November 10, 1986, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Act was signed into law. It was a revolutionary idea at the time. Not since the Blackstone Valley ignited America's Industrial Revolution would the communities between Providence and Worcester have such an opportunity to reconnect and chart a bright future.

Since the Valley's national designation, there have been major changes throughout the landscape. Visitor centers and museums are open; historic sites have been restored and interpreted; there are now sixteen species of fish in the Blackstone River, where there were only two 30 years ago; and the riverway is being transformed into a recreational asset with the development of the bikeway and numerous river access sites. Communities and businesses are embracing the concept of heritage development and balancing conservation and growth to make certain that the quality of life we enjoy is not lost.

On November 10, 2006, the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission's legislative authority comes to a close. The Blackstone Valley's future depends on reauthorization legislation that will allow the Commission to continue the work that has been so vital to the people of the Valley. Our congressional delegation, which has been so supportive over the years and has fought annually for support for the Blackstone, is again taking a lead role to assure that the work of the Corridor Commission continues.

Without a doubt, the heritage corridor designation has made a difference in the Blackstone River Valley, but there has been no time more critical in the history of our national heritage corridor than now. A group of concerned Valley residents has formed the “Corridor Keepers,” a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the vision for our national heritage corridor. We ask you to lend your support to the Corridor Keepers and your voice to the reauthorization efforts.

On behalf of my fellow commissioners and the National Park Service staff, I extend a sincere thank-you to our congressional delegation: Senators Kennedy, Kerry, Reed, and Chafee; Representatives Kennedy, Langevin, Neal, and McGovern; Governors Romney and Carcieri; our Rhode Island and Massachusetts state legislators; our city and town leaders, and all our community partners for all they have done to realize the visions of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The Blackstone Valley is an American success story!

Robert D. Billington, Chairman

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission

What Will the Future Bring

Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future: Exploring the Sustainability of the Corridor

With an eye toward its 2006 termination, two years ago the Commission formed a Futures Committee to evaluate its accomplishments over the past eighteen years, assess the federal investment and how that investment has been leveraged through public and private commitments, identify future actions and commitments, evaluate the Commission's management structure, and explore options as the Commission moves forward. The Futures Committee asked the Conservation Study Institute (CSI) of the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a sustainability study through a public forum to explore these questions.

The CSI formed a Study Team that gathered data from numerous sources and engaged members of the Commission, Corridor partners, experts in the field of heritage areas and partnerships, and the public through interviews and public meetings. From these diverse voices, the Study Team heard the key ingredients and elements that have helped to create and sustain the successful partnership system in the Blackstone Corridor.

A Shared Heritage: having a shared heritage and shared story links people to place and serves as the "glue" that holds the region together. This shared heritage allows

different organizations and individuals to engage each other around a common sense of history.

A Strong Regional Identity: having a strong regional identity and sense of pride and place serves to erase political, geographical, and institutional boundaries. Having a regional identity that the Corridor promotes allows people and organizations to think more broadly in terms of their goals and objectives. It creates a climate where organizations with seemingly different goals find common ground.

A 'Keeper of the Vision': having the Commission as a central keeper of the vision, provides a place both in terms of a physical venue and a conceptual space for various organizations to connect. Equally important is the time needed for partnerships to mature and for the Commission to provide support as organizations evolve.

Based on the public input and the Study Team's investigations, suggested future management options were presented in the report, "Reflecting on the Past, Looking to the Future: Exploring the Sustainability of the Corridor." The Commission has accepted this report and is applying its contents toward the formulation of a strategy for the future.

The Commissioners convey their heartfelt thanks to the Conservation Study Institute, the Study Team, and all those who participated in the development of the report which will serve as a stepping stone to the future of the Corridor.

"The Corridor is the place where the vision gets sorted out. And when I say 'the Corridor,' I don't mean the Corridor itself. What I mean is the events and the people they [the Commission] convene. They're sort of this lovely umbrella, and they invite everybody under to talk about things. And it's just wonderful, absolutely terrific."

from an interview by the Study Team



Photo of Slater Mill by Jim McElholm.

White House Awards Valley "Preserve America" Designation

"You are pioneers in this initiative, which shows just how proud the people of the Blackstone Valley are of their cities, states, and their place in our nation's history."

Lynn Scarlett



On June 25, 2004, Blackstone Valley communities took center stage as each received its "Preserve America" designation. Through Preserve America designations, the President and Mrs. Bush recognize the exceptional efforts of communities to use cultural and natural resources to promote tourism, foster revitalization, create jobs, and educate the public about the importance of historic preservation initiatives. Assistant Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett

toured the Valley and presented the awards to each community at Slater Mill in Pawtucket, Rhode Island; in Woonsocket, Rhode Island; in Sutton, Massachusetts; and at the Worcester Historical Museum. The day-long journey featured a showcase of the historic assets of the Valley and provided the assistant secretary with a chance to experience the Valley's partnerships in action. Secretary Scarlett observed, "You are pioneers in this initiative, which shows just how proud the people of the Blackstone Valley are of their cities, states, and their place in our nation's history." For more information on this distinguished designation, visit www.preserveamerica.gov. Watch for those Preserve America signs to be popping up in a community near you!



Photos of Assistant Secretary Scarlett and Margaret Carroll by Jim McElholm.

Interpreting the Past Defines the Future

New Exhibit at River Bend Farm

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation celebrated the opening of its new permanent exhibit, "Following the Plough" on April 26, 2004, at River Bend Farm Visitor Center in Uxbridge, Massachusetts. The exhibit takes visitors on an educational journey through the evolution of agriculture in New England, painting a vivid picture of what life was like during the time of the Industrial Revolution, and reflecting

on the dramatic transformation of the Valley from an agrarian society to an industrial giant.

Along the Blackstone Celebrates Ten Years of Storytelling

In its tenth year, *Along the Blackstone*, the National Park Service's cable television show produced by Ranger Chuck Arning, continues to feature stories about experiences, preservation efforts, and programs that support projects of Corridor partners. Highlights in 2004 included "Uncovering the Hidden Blackstone Canal," a four-part series tracing the route of the 1828 Blackstone Canal and describing how the canal helped shape the communities of Albion, Manville, Woonsocket, Blackstone, and Millville. With assistance from local historians Ray Bacon of the Museum of Work and Culture, Margaret Carroll of Millville, Rhode Island State Preservation Historian, Rick Greenwood, and Ranger Kevin Klyberg, the series created an understanding of how the landscape has changed over the past 175 years. Other shows airing were "Discovering the River with the Paddle Club" and "Preservation Stories – Connecting People to Places." Along the Blackstone can be viewed on local cable stations.

Sutton Celebrates Tricentennial

The Town of Sutton's Tricentennial celebration commenced in January with the opening of "Tell Tale Treasures" sponsored by the Commission and others at the Worcester Historical Museum. During the four years of planning and preparation, Judi Vaillancourt and Hillary White collected artifacts from all over the country related to Sutton's history over the centuries. The exhibit attracted hundreds of people and was considered a premier event at the Worcester Historical Museum this year.

The Town sponsored numerous other events throughout the year, including a traditional New England Fourth of July parade culminating in a fireworks display. The Town of Sutton, in conjunction with its 300th anniversary committee, wanted to leave a lasting legacy to the community to commemorate this event. The committee and Town selected a site on the banks of the Blackstone River adjacent to the proposed Blackstone River Bikeway to construct a new park that will include picnic tables, historic markers, interpretive signs, a trail, canoe portage, public art, and a reflective area. Funding has been committed by the town, the Corridor Commission, and Mass Highway.

Construction of this five-acre park is anticipated to begin in fall 2005.

Interpreting the Past, Present and Future

Staff and volunteers of the Corridor Commission presented programs to more than 10,000 visitors in 2004, at sites around the Blackstone River Valley and to audiences ranging from kindergarteners to Elderhostlers. Folks attended the Ranger Days lecture series at the Museum of Work and Culture, Paddle Club, summer walkabouts, and several events and festivals such as the dedication of Tricentennial Park and Rivers Day. Rangers met with thousands of students, both in the classroom and in the field, to share some of the wonderful stories and sites that make the Blackstone River Valley come alive. NPS park rangers play a major role in providing research documents for interpretive elements of projects and sites such as the Blackstone Canal, Hassanamesitt Woods, Tricentennial Park, River Bend Farm, and others.

The Corridor Commission staff has been working with members of the Blackstone Valley Education Network to develop multi-site packages and a graduate course for teachers to learn how to incorporate the programs of heritage sites into their classroom curriculum. Work has begun on a history of the Blackstone Valley to be published for the Corridor's twentieth anniversary in 2006. Look for our park rangers at sites and events in your neighborhood.

Raising a Ruckus to Revive the Blackstone Canal

Revival of interest in the Blackstone Canal is everywhere! In Uxbridge, groups continue to study the reintroduction of canal boats for use in interpretation and tourism. In Sutton, the 300th Committee lobbied for use of segments of the canal as bikeway. In Worcester, Canal Task Force member John Spillane worked with Massachusetts Senator Harriet Chandler and Representative John Fresolo to secure \$17 million in the State Transportation Bond Bill to recreate the Canal from Union Station south to Green Island. Senator Richard T. Moore has also drafted legislation to provide \$1.5 million for canal-related projects in other communities.

Just as the canal brought new economic life to communities and businesses in historic times, it can enhance the quality of life today. In conjunction with the Worcester Historical Museum and project contractor Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, the Corridor Commission is in the process of mapping the Blackstone Canal in both Massachusetts and Rhode Island and developing a plan that will identify, locate, and evaluate the extent of remaining sections to guide preservation efforts.

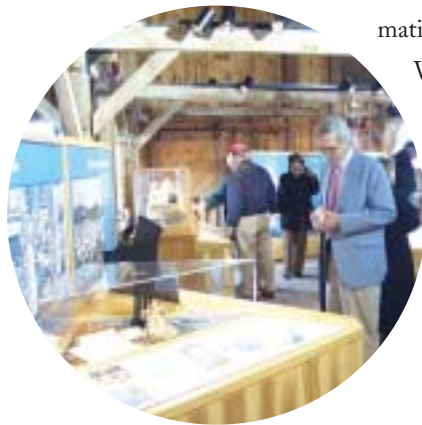
Hassanamesitt Woods Preserved

The Town of Grafton marked a significant date in its history with the 350th anniversary of the Hassanamesitt Woods Indian Praying Village Site founded by the Reverend John Eliot in 1654. The Grafton Land Trust asked the Trust for Public Land (TPL) to help explore land protection options. TPL, the Town, and the Commission launched an archaeological investigation with the University of Massachusetts, which determined that the site was indeed linked to the praying village.

TPL did an incredible job in assembling the necessary resources to purchase the property and on September 10, 2004, TPL transferred the property to the Town for permanent protection. A ceremony dedicating the land transfer was performed by the Nipmuc Nation Tribal Council. Additional funds from the Commission supported a cultural landscape study of the property, which will be key to understanding the site's archaeology, and will help to determine the nature of human influences on the landscape over time. The Town of Grafton will use this study as the basis for appropriate use and treatment of the property. According to the study, Hassanamesitt Woods is one of "the most significant Native American sites in New England today."

"I sense the Corridor [Commission's] program as being much more grassroots than anything else I've seen, and yet, it's the federal government, which is insane! I mean, wait a minute, a federal effort that is grassroots? Maybe they've turned the system upside down."

from an interview by the Study Team



The People in our Community Shape the Future

Destination Blackstone Valley

The Heritage Corridor, Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Tourism Committee celebrated their fourth year as a tourism partnership. The “Blackstone Valley Tourism Collaborative” was developed to implement a cooperative outreach program and enhance the visibility of the Valley to the region, New England, and national and international audiences. The Tourism Collaborative has implemented a strategic advertising effort highlighting the benefits of touring the Valley, and has been marketing the region in Yankee Magazine, the Rhode Island Guide, and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism Guide. The Collaborative’s program includes public outreach and development of a series of products including driving tours, bicycle tours, and an extensive Blackstone Valley “DeTour” program targeted to day-long and half-day visitor experiences in the area. This year the Collaborative will launch the new “Explore” campaign aimed at supporting the heritage, recreational, and cultural programs of the Valley.



The Next Generation of River Stewards

Since Michael and Jan Ferry (previous recipients of the Chafee award) established the Blackstone Valley Rivers Project in February 2001, over 60 area teachers, and hundreds of students, have been taught about the environmental issues of the Blackstone River and its watershed. By “teaching teachers” how to integrate water and river studies into their schools’ curriculums, the message of achieving a “Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone River by 2015” is reaching students throughout the Valley.

Another huge success this year was the 2004 Clean Water Festival sponsored by the Blackstone River Coalition, under the leadership of the Blackstone Valley Rivers Project. The festival, a two-day annual event, provides students, teachers, business professionals, and environmentalists a chance to join together and promote the importance and ways of protecting our most precious natural resource, water. The 2005 Clean Water Festival will be held at Rhode Island College on March 14, 2005.



The Call to Serve

In 2002 President George W. Bush issued a challenge to all Americans to make time to help their neighbors, communities, and the nation by dedicating at least 4,000 hours, or two years, of service over the course of his or her life. The President’s Call to Service Award honors those who answer the challenge. The following volunteers and Heritage Corridor Commissioners have been recognized for exceeding the call:

Commissioners:

Matthew Amorello
Robert Billington
Mary K. Connor
Richard T. Moore
Louise Redding
Ted Sanderson
Burton Stallwood
Donna Williams

Volunteers:

Irene Blais
Sarah Buchanan
Margaret Carroll
Keith Hainley
Barney Harcourt
Leon Kowal
Rita Labonne
John Marsland
Gene Peloquin
William Potter
Val Stegemoen

Congratulations to all for receiving this prestigious award!



Volunteers Shaping the Future

The Volunteers in Parks (VIP) Program continued to grow in 2004. The 167 active VIPs collectively reported 27,403 hours over the past year. Volunteers helped staff visitor centers at the Museum of Work and Culture, River Bend Farm, Roger Williams National Memorial, and the Kelly House and participated in the Greenway Challenge and the Paddle Club. Volunteers developed a newsletter, an enhanced website, and a web-based scrapbook to highlight Valley-wide volunteer contributions and opportunities.



2004 Honors:

- » Irene Blais was named Volunteer of the Month by the Volunteer Center of Rhode Island for her enormous contributions to the Heritage Corridor and the Museum of Work and Culture.
- » John Marsland and Friends of the Blackstone received the R.I. Environmental Impact Award for their efforts in conducting multiple cleanups and raising environmental awareness.
- » Friends of the Blackstone received the George P. Hartzog Group Volunteer Award for the Northeast Region of the National Park Service.
- » The John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Volunteers in Parks Program received the National Park Service Northeast Regional Award for Outstanding Volunteer Programs.

The VIP program started small and has fully evolved into a large team of engaged citizens who care about and love the Blackstone Valley and want to preserve it for future generations. Our heartfelt thanks for all the outstanding work done by volunteers in the Blackstone Valley!

Bike, Run, and Paddle New England’s Eco-Challenge

The Greenway Challenge celebrated its fourth annual event on September 25, 2004, when over 1,000 spectators gathered as 50 teams and seven “Ironmen” set out to run, bike, and paddle 60 miles through the Blackstone River Valley. The Greenway Challenge was established in 2001 as just that—a challenge! It is a challenge for all to reclaim the riverway, to construct a bikeway from Providence to Worcester, to restore the health of the river to fishable and swimmable status by 2015, and to build a greenway park system

that provides for recreation, relaxation and public access to the river. Team Great Canadian finished in first place for the fourth consecutive year with a time of four hours, 43 minutes, and 56 seconds under the leadership of Captain Hans T. Berg. The Greenway Challenge is fast becoming a recognized eco-challenge event in New England. Major sponsors this year included UniBank for Savings, Providence and Worcester Railroad, Citadel Communications, Whitin Community Center, Rhode Island Foundation, Sunshine Sign Company, Eastern Mountain Sports, and the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce. Many thanks go to organizers Sue Barker of the Corridor Keepers and Barbara Dixon of the heritage corridor staff. The Commission thanks Sue for four years of dedication to this and other projects around the Valley and wishes her success in her future endeavors.

Leadership Blackstone Valley Taking Charge

Leadership Blackstone Valley (LBV), an educational initiative of the Blackstone Valley Institute, is an intensive, hands-on program that has cultivated more than 80 community leaders throughout the Valley. The initiative was developed in partnership with the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce to provide emerging local leaders with opportunities to engage on issues that affect communities and the region as a whole. The course introduces participants to the Valley’s history and provides participants with the knowledge and skills to address economic development issues, changing demographics and diversity, natural resources management, and citizen engagement. The goal is to graduate local leaders who will be Valley advocates and who will guide land and resource conservation in their organizations and municipalities. Special thanks go out to the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce Education Foundation for its continued leadership and support of this program. For more information on LBV and its initiatives, visit the Blackstone Valley Chamber of Commerce website at www.blackstonevalley.org.



The Future Flows Along the River

More Miles Added to Bikeway

Rhode Island completed another mile of bikeway, using the existing abutments at the Pratt Dam to cross the river and bring cyclists south through the restored Lonsdale Marsh. Two more miles were completed within the Route 146/I-90 interchange in Massachusetts, crossing the Blackstone Canal and River and providing users with an opportunity to explore a long-forgotten area. On completion, the bikeway will cover 48 miles and link the Valley’s heritage sites with numerous recreational opportunities. The bikeway is also an official section of the East Coast Greenway which connects major cities from Maine to Florida. For more information visit www.blackstoneriverbikeway.com.

“Jump In” Campaign Grows

In its second year, the “Jump In” campaign continues to expand support for a Fishable/Swimmable Blackstone by 2015. Led by the Massachusetts Audubon Society’s Broad Meadow Brook Sanctuary and the Blackstone River Coalition (a collaboration of area-wide watershed organizations), the groups have worked to establish a strong foundation for the development of a cleaner river. The Blackstone River Coalition held an interagency summit at River Bend Farm in Uxbridge to unveil the message and engage partners. Staffs from federal and state environmental agencies were present, including the Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, and Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. As a result, various bi-state task forces have met to merge previously drafted action plans into one comprehensive plan for the Blackstone River Watershed. Short- and long-term priorities have been identified. Coalition members are easily recognized by their “Brookie” pins signifying support for cleaner waters. Many of the Coalition’s efforts are featured in the new, expanded “Zap the Blackstone” website. To find out more about current initiatives or to get involved in the Coalition, visit www.zaptheblackstone.org.

Exploring New Visions for the River

In order to get where you’re going, you have to have a road map! So the Commission and Massachusetts Audubon Society’s Broad Meadow Brook Wildlife Sanctuary in Worcester set out to paint a picture of the future face of the Blackstone River. Eleven River Visioning workshops were held in communities along the main stem of the Blackstone River. Participants from Lincoln and North Smithfield, Rhode Island and Blackstone, Uxbridge, and Grafton, Massachusetts, dreamed, explored, and identified new ways in which their communities could connect with the Blackstone River. Those dreams are now becoming a reality for the Town of Lincoln, as it evaluates the creation of a community redevelopment area for the Lonsdale Bleachery, a mill complex on the banks of the Blackstone. The Town of Uxbridge is exploring the revitalization of its downtown and enhancements to the Route 16 corridor. Bi-state initiatives and relationships have evolved along the Blackstone River and Canal in North Smithfield and Blackstone that will explore how to enhance open space and improve links to those communities. Private interests are evaluating the redevelopment of the Fisherville Mill site in Grafton, Massachusetts, for new housing and recreational amenities. The River Visioning process has proved a success in providing a forum for communities to explore shared dreams of redevelopment along the Blackstone River, thus embracing the Valley’s core resource.

First River Landing Opens in Central Falls

Rivers Day 2004 was marked by the opening of the long-anticipated Central Falls Landing in Central Falls, Rhode Island. Several hundred visitors, river advocates, and dignitaries welcomed the completion of this extensive docking facility, which is part of a larger river-focused program for the site that includes a river science center, housing, and business opportunities. The new docking facilities accommodate the canal boat, *Samuel Slater* and the *Blackstone Valley Explorer*, and provide a venue for various river-supported activities such as river tours, paddle club, and special events.

Two more landings are ready for construction over the next year. Plans for Manville Landing in Cumberland, RI include facilities for accessing the river, interpretive signs, and revealing raceways and mill structures. Woonsocket Landing in the Market Square area of Woonsocket will provide access for paddlers and add one more feature to this revitalized downtown area. Twelve other river access sites are currently being designed all along the River. Look for more landings to open soon as we meet along the Blackstone!

“It’s funny, and I almost have to laugh because the Corridor has done the impossible here. They’ve gotten our town’s land trust talking with the Economic Development Committee.”
from an interview by the Study Team

FISCAL YEAR 2004 APPROPRIATIONS

The Commission is supported by a Federal Congressional Appropriation which has leveraged substantial local, state and private funds to pursue a wide range of projects that benefit the National Heritage Corridor.

COMMISSION OPERATIONS	\$ 795,000
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Congressional Appropriations to support Commission operations for administration and project development.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OPERATIONS	\$ 320,000
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Appropriations through the Operations of the National Park Service to provide technical specialists in historic preservation, planning and design, environment and National Park Rangers for interpretation.

DEVELOPMENT FUNDS	\$745,000
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Congressional line-item appropriation to provide funding to implement the following preservation and development strategies outlined in the Commission Plan and legislation.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS	
Special Events and Festivals	35,000
Educational Ranger Programs	20,000
Commission Communications Program	41,000
Community Planning Assistance	25,000
Water Quality Monitoring Program	20,000
Sustainability Report	52,000
“Revolutions” Newsletter	30,000
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS	
Lonsdale Bleachery Historic Structure Report	12,000
Hassanamesitt Cultural Landscape Assessment	15,000
Historic Reuben Mason House Restoration	10,000
Grafton Mill Village Revitalization Plan	15,000
Whitin Historic Mill Bldg Historic Structures Report	17,860
RIVERWAYS AND RECREATION	
River Expedition Planning and Execution	45,000
Multi-use Trail Connections	10,000
Pawtucket Town Landing and River Access	5,000
Blackstone River Conservation Alliance	15,000
Tricentennial Park Development	35,000
Watershed and River related studies and activities	28,665
Fishable/Swimmable Campaign	46,335
INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION	
Heritage Tourism Programs	56,000
Quarterly Calendar of Events Publication	52,000
Blackstone River and Canal Park Brochure	1,500
Blackstone Valley Education Programs	18,900
History of the Blackstone Valley Book	60,000
Slater Mill Historic Site Interpretive Series	20,000
Museum of Work and Culture Exhibitry	19,740
Blackstone River Theatre Cultural Arts Programming	20,000
Waters Farm Curriculum Development	15,000
Administrative Costs	4,000